

The Absence of Self: A Hermeneutical Understanding of the Anatman Experience

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Anatman Experience

In the 6th century BC the mythical Guatama (Gotama in Pali) began describing the Anatman experience, the experience of absence of self. This early Buddhist account of existence was characterized by selflessness (anatman), impermanence (anitya) and suffering (duhkha). The mythic Gotama's experience of absence of self and his teachings about the absence of self, present a powerful and intuitive understanding of the dramatic existential human experience of the loss of self. This experience is phenomenologically the same as the loss of the felt sense of embodied Being .

Early Buddhist Understanding and the Mythical Gotama

This early Buddhist understanding of Anatman was elaborated by the mythical Gotama . For the mythical Gotama all human beings were reducible to aggregations of basic causal energies. Gotama's experience was that mind's perception of independent phenomena was illusory and not real. The mythic Gotama's philosophical view of human phenomena was that human experience was selfless. These views were forms of dramatic anti-realism.

When our experience of the world is considered to be illusory and unreal, this view is a distorting context for us. We may become an 'as if' person. The 'as if' person relates to the world 'as if' it is real, but really sees the world as illusion nonetheless. The 'as if' person relates to the people they love, 'as if' they are real, but considers them ultimately to be an illusion. The 'as if' person relates 'as if' their love is real, 'as if' their shared world is real and 'as if' their actions are real, but nonetheless all is illusion. The 'as if' person acts 'as if' they have self-agency. The 'as if' person's action has

the intrinsic quality of pretend. Authenticity of self does not exist when we live within the anatman view. Authentic to what? We are no self. Authentic to whom. There is no self within the other. Authenticity is an illusionary experience.

All reality, all experience and all beings are simply a function of dependent origination. Dependent origination is the infinity of causation. All beings, all experience and all persons are unreal and lack self-actuality and self-agency. These assumptions are the mythical Gotama's foundational views of human experience and existence. These 'as if' views are the foundational assumptions of early Buddhism.

Absence of Being

Gotama's philosophical views and philosophical opinions arose out of his personal experience of the lack of the embodied sense of Being which Gotama named as lack of self, Anatman.

The Intertwining of Self and Being: Our Existential Phenomenological Presentation

This phenomenological presentation does not depend on the factual historicity of Gotama's experience of non-self experience. This presentation does not depend on Gotama being a factual historical person or not. Our focus is on the early Buddhist experience of Anatman experience as a metaphorical expression of the human existential experience of the intertwining of self and Being.

This intertwining drama is elaborated as an existential experience of the sense of Being as self and the existential sense of the absence of Being as absence of self. This philosophical drama of Anatman reflects the existential experience of the mythical thinker Gotama. The mythical Gotama's experience was that the human person was selfless, and the experience that human life was a life of suffering, and his conviction that our experience of all phenomena is illusionary.

Gotama teaching emphasized the lack of ongoing continuity of self as the lack of the ongoing continuity of Being. Gotama lived within a relentless fragmentation of the sense of self and the corresponding fragmentation of

the sense of Being. His lived experience reflected the meaningless of affective states, the relentless suffering of lived experience, and the lack of personal attachment to anything or anyone.

Gotama also focused on the intrinsic painfulness and destructiveness of human desire. He lived within the experience of profound absence of the sense of personhood both within himself and within others. His lack of inner sense of self was a source of his pervasive sense of depersonalization. The mythical Gotama's experiential understanding and his philosophical teaching continuously expressed his experiential lack of innermost self and corresponding experiential lack of the innermost sense of Being. He lived in the emptiness of the lack of the sense of Being within him and surrounding him.

Demythologizing and the Hermeneutic Tradition of Rudolph Bultman

This essay is written within the hermeneutic tradition of Rudolph Bultman. Bultman's hermeneutics demythologizes religious experience and demythologizes religious teachings, demythologizes religious scriptures and demythologizes religious biographies. This demythologizing is Rudolph Bultman's method of phenomenologically interpreting religious tradition and religious experience as a phenomenological experience expressed in the language and understanding of Existential Phenomenology.

The personal life experience of the mythical Gotama, his philosophical understanding of human experience and his teaching is understood and conceptualized in the language in the thought of existential phenomenology. In this existential and phenomenological context the Anatman experience reflects the profound human experience of the absence of the sense of self and the corresponding human experience of the profound absence of a sense of Existential Being-ness. Gotama did not experience the felt sense of Being-ness either within himself or in the world around him.

Gotama's personal existential experience of Anatman reflects our own profound and terrifying human experience of the pervasive absence of inner self and the absence of embodied Being. The philosophical articulation of Anatman ultimately reflects Gotama's personal existential

experience of the lack of a personal sense of embodied self, and a continuous preoccupation with his experience of inner emptiness and voidness of his life world. His personal experience becomes a philosophical attribution, a philosophical position and the philosophical assumption of early Buddhism.

Hermeneutical Narrative

Foundational Teaching and the Person of Gotama

Concerning the reality of the historical Buddha, the text by David Weeks is an excellent summary. The name of Weeks paper is "The Idea of the Historical Buddha". This text describes in detail how centuries of scholarship have failed to establish Gotama's historical existence. David Weeks describes how we are left with the proposition that Buddhism was founded by a historical person who has not been linked to any historical facts. For David Weeks Gotama's existence lacks historical evidence and is dubious. Weeks concludes we do not have any basis for treating Buddha as a historical figure.

The biographical study by Donald Lopez 'From Stone to Flesh.' is sophisticated hermeneutical text that elaborates the unfolding experience of historical mythic cultural experience of the Buddha. Lopez's text elaborates the many forms of Buddhism and the various different elaborations concerning the historical would be founder.

Stephan Batchelor has series of wonderful of books that focus on the early Pali textual representations about Gotama and his early teaching. Batchelor's book called 'Secular Buddhism' is especially revealing of the original Pali teachings about Gotama. Stephen Batchelor's articulation of Gotama's original teachings do not reflect the existential nihilism and existential pessimism and the existential solipsism that is often ascribed to the mythical Gotama and to the early Indian Buddhist commentaries.

Another foundational text is Early Buddhist Teachings by Professor Karunadasa. This text presents the philosophical themes of early Buddhism in an unparalleled manner.

What is historically and textually manifested here is that there are very different textual presentations of Gotama with a wide range of different understandings, different philosophical assumptions and teachings. There

is no one Gotama. In fact there are many versions of Gotama. These different Gotamas reflect the many varied Buddhist traditions and lineages, varied Buddhist cultures and varied different time epochs of the historical unfolding of Buddhism.

Foundational Teaching of Early Buddhism

The mythic stories and mythical teachings of Gotama are presented in many places and many sources. The early foundational teaching of the Noble truths, the Four seals, and the foundational teachings of dependent origination, the foundational philosophical view of the unreality of phenomena, the foundational view of selflessness of all phenomena, as well as the absence of personal self, the destructiveness of human desire are to be found in many various text within the early Buddhist traditions.

The philosophical view of the various later Buddhist traditions greatly shape their understanding and shape the relevance of the early teachings of Gotama. There are infinite forms of Buddhism that reflect different epochs and times, different countries and cultures, different lineages within traditions, different teachers within a lineage.

I will give a brief example of two forms of the mythical Gotama's teaching. First, I will present the Gotama as contextualized in Indian Buddhism. Here Gotama is considered the teacher of the noble truths and the four seals.

The Four Seals As Contextualized In Indian Buddhism

These early teachings of the mythical Gotama about the Noble Truths and the Four Seals, are foundational for early Buddhism. Lama Dzongsar Khyenste writes in Bodhidharma Magazine that if the path you are on contains these four seals you can consider yourself a Buddhist. If the path you are on does not contain these 4 seals then your path is not Buddhist.

These foundational seals are to quote Dzongsar:

- 1) "All compounded things are impermanent."

2) “All emotions and affects are painful.” This is something that only Buddhist would talk about. Many other religions worship other attributes like love with celebration and songs. Buddhists think this is all suffering.

3) “All phenomena are empty, they are without inherent existence”. This is the foundational view of Buddhism. The fourth seal is that 4) Nirvana is beyond extremes.

Each of the many and various Buddhist traditions will have their own assumptions and viewpoints about the life and meaning of Gotama’s early teachings. Over time each Buddhist tradition will emerge with different understandings and language about the foundational teachings. This understanding of the four Seals and Noble truths reflect the views of the early Indian Buddhist tradition.

The Pali View

I will present another view of Gotama and his teachings. This passage is from the Samyutta Nikaya Sutra that was written early in Pali Language and reflects a very different Gotama and his profound understanding of love and human existence.

Ananda said: “Friendship with what is lovely, association with what is lovely, intimacy with what is lovely—that is half of the holy life”

The Buddha responded: do not say that, Ananda.

“It’s the whole not the half of the holy life. One so blessed with what is lovely will develop a right way of being, a thinking that no longer grasps at what is untrue, an aim that is concerned and ready, a contemplation that is unattached and free. Association with what is lovely is the whole of the holy life.” Samyutta Nikaya Sutra. This quote is from the book ‘The Wisdom of the Buddha’ by Anne Bancroft.

These two very different presentations reflecting the understanding of the two different views of the Buddha’s foundational understandings and values and views of human existence. One form of teaching reflects the teachings of the Gotama of early Indian Buddhism and the other form of teaching reflects the understanding of the early Pali teachings of Gotama. The Pali teachings present a simpler Gotama, direct, positive and valuing love.

Which Gotama is the Focus of this Phenomenological Elaboration of Anatman?

The mythic Gotama as reflected in Indian Buddhism is the focus of our existential phenomenological view of the Anatman understanding. Gotama is contextualized and directly referenced in early Indian Buddhism. In a future text I will focus on the early Pali text from a Bultman hermeneutical interpretation understanding of existential phenomenology. These Pali text present a positive view of Gotama and his view of the embodiment of self as embodiment of Being. This of course is totally close to the Daoist view as well as the Dzogchen view. In the Daoist view and Dzogchen view the sense of self is the sense of Being and the sense of Being is the sense of self. The sense of self in Daoism and Dzogchen is onto-cosmological.

Hermeneutic Realm

There is within this 6th BC century cultural epoch of India an authentic range of the experience of the presence of self and experience of the absence of self. The presence of the sense of self will reflect an onto-cosmological view and the sense of absence of self will reflect an absence of the onto-cosmological experience of self.

The hermeneutic realm is not literal and is not the truth of judgment which is whether something is or is not, but rather the truth of Aletheia. The cultural manifestation of the truth of Aletheia, is the truth of the unfolding and the un-concealment of the experience of Being as both a personal event and an event of an epoch. The mythical Gotama is a cultural hero of self-liberation who elaborated the transcendental path, through which he overcame his existential suffering of absence, absence of self and the absence of the felt sense of Being.

Personal Void-ness and Personal Emptiness

Gotama's teaching reflects his personal existential experience that in essence human beings are void of self. Human beings live in void-ness. In Gotama's thought, human beings lack an inner experience of self and he

also had the understanding that people thought that their mind and the functions of their mind were the locus of self. Gotama knew that his mind's mental and conceptual representational self was contingent, fleeting, and momentary. For Gotama there was no continuity of experience within his mind.

Today most contemporary people still think that their self is their mind and their mind is their self. Many contemporary western cognitive psychologists and psychotherapists actually think that their self is their mind and their mind is their self. This sense of mind as self, lacks not only the continuity of Being, but the depth of Being and the multidimensionality of Being.

Existential Emptiness of Being Reflects Ontological Lack

Even though a person may be located in their mind as self and think of functions of their mind is self, the person nonetheless continuously experiences existential void-ness and the profound experience of emptiness. Here, I elaborate the word emptiness as emptiness of Being. This pervasive emptiness of Being as this pervasive void-ness of self, will dominate a person's existential life experience. The profound sense of the absence of Being as an ontological sense of self will dominate and organize a person's existential perception within a melancholic mood and melancholic states of unending loss. Melancholia reflects the inner sense of the absence of Being within the human being. The pervasive sense of essential emptiness manifest when a person lacks the innate sense of self as the innate sense of ongoing continuity of Being. Melancholia is the experience of absence of self, as the absence of the sense of Being. Melancholia is an affective mood of absence.

As the great existential psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott so often would say the sense of self is the ongoing sense of continuity of Being. This is the existential phenomenological view of self.

Sunyata as Emptiness

Emptiness as sunyata has many and various historical meanings. Experientially and historically emptiness has many faces. Emptiness has different manifestations and appearances. Sometimes the face of emptiness is a void or abyss like experience. This abyss of emptiness can open a person to the actuality of a base-less experience, groundless existence. The sense of baseless of our existence results in abyss like experience of falling and falling and endlessly falling.

This void of sunyata can manifest continuous experience of disappearing and dissolving into a terrifying nothingness. The emptiness of sunyata appears and can manifest the felt sense of the profound lack of the sense of personal Being. Sunyata for some, is the experience of inner most absence of the sense of Being. The affective mood of this experience, of the existential abyss is annihilation anxiety and unending ontological anxiety.

No-Thingness as Being, No Thingness as Primordial Awareness

Emptiness as sunyata can also be our experience of primordial awareness as no -thingness. From within this no-thingness of primordial awareness everything and anything manifests. This foundational no-thingness brings forth infinite numbers of beings. This foundational no-thingness is source, and this foundational no thingness is the nature of Being. Being which is not a being brings forth and self-manifests infinite numbers of beings. Being is not a thing but brings forth infinite numberless beings. Being is no thingness from which everything and anything manifests. Our essential awareness as no thingness illuminates our experience of Being. Awareness illuminates our own inner most experience of Being and also the innermost Being of all phenomena.

Philosophically sunyata is the nature of Being that creates everything and anything. This sunyata is potential space. Infinite universal potential space. Sunyata is pure creativity. Sunyata is the experience of the Pure Being of our own Being.

Sometimes the emptiness of Being is experienced like endless and infinite space. Sometimes the emptiness of Being is experienced as beatific

unbound openness. Sometimes the emptiness of Being is experienced as deep unmoving stillness. Sometimes the emptiness of Being's self-manifestation manifests the experience of stillness and movement simultaneously. Sometimes emptiness of Being is experienced as bliss, vast bliss. The vast purity of Being is experienced as bliss, ontological Bliss.

These variations of the experience of the manifestations of sunyata emptiness unfold over personal time as a person becomes aware of their own awareness as the openness of Being. This awareness is knowingness of Being. Sometimes emptiness of our own Being which is Being itself is experienced as pure potentiality, a clear brightness. This is emptiness as source, as ground of Being. The openness of the ground of Being in the language of Dzogchen is Dharmakaya.

Openness of Being and the Absence of Being: Two Different Experiences

Emptiness can be experienced as the very nature of Being. This sunyata or the emptiness of Being means that the very nature of Being is Openness, the unbound openness of Being. Nonetheless, the phrase emptiness of Being can also mean the felt sense of absence or the lack of the felt sense of Being!

This openness of Being can mean the ontological quality of the openness of Being. This openness of Being is an essential quality of Being. When a human being embodies Being they embody this profound openness of Being to Being itself and to the Being-ness of Being of all the beings. Being self-manifests as the Being of all beings.

So the word sunyata implies the experience and nature of the emptiness of Being. The personal experience of emptiness is a vast range of experience often beyond words and language. The human range of experiencing emptiness is vast and ineffable. The experience of emptiness can range from the nihilistic experience that cannot be thought. Groundless baseless existence! And the experience of emptiness can be the most positive experience of unbound bliss as gnosis or primordial knowingness.

Range of Meaning and Wide Range of Confusion

This wide range of the meaning of emptiness is not only personally experiential, but also there is a vast range of historical cultural unfolding of the appearance of emptiness and articulation of emptiness by the various philosophical traditions of Buddhism and other eastern traditions. Over time the phenomena of emptiness has been articulated in various ways, and at times these ways are in complete opposition to each other

Personal Sense of Absence and Emptiness

Many person's continuously experience the sense of absence and emptiness throughout their entire life. Often the person may not know the source of emptiness or the source of absence. The personal experiences of loss may activate the ongoing sense of void-ness and absence of self as the corresponding the absence of Being.

Some people seldom experience the state of absence and emptiness. It is also true many people minimize their existential experience and create the illusion of normal character. Yet there are ordinary people who live continuously in state of spaciousness and luminous presence of Being. These same people may live in the state of ongoing continuity of Being and experience this ongoing continuity of Being as their innate sense of embodied self. Many people experience an ongoing continuity of Being as continuity of self. In their ongoing continuity of Being they will naturally experience stability and fullness of presence within themselves.

Lack of Innate Sense of Self as Lack of Being

The mythical Gotama continuously thought that people do not have an innate sense of self. Gotama himself experienced an inner sense of emptiness of self. His pervasive sense of absence of self, reflected his experience of the lack of the felt sense of Being. Gotama suffered from the sense of absence. His relentless sense of inner absence naturally unfolded into the sense of depersonalization as well as the experience of the lack of realness of phenomena. He lacked a personal sense of realness and a sense of the realness of the world. He lived in dissociative experience. He later used his dissociative experience as paradoxical path to self-liberation from the suffering of absence.

Lack of Personhood

The mythical Gotama believed and philosophized that his inner experience of absence was the very nature of human reality. He would philosophize and assert that all human beings are void and there is no inner self. He experienced the continuous absence of the base of Being and also experienced the lack of continuity of Being within himself and others.

Because of the lack of the sense of being within himself and within the world, Gotama experienced human experience and the human world as unreal and illusionary. His lived experience lacked personhood and he experienced that his own desire was the source of suffering and was self-destructive. Because of his lack of felt sense of self, he continuously experienced a lack of self-agency. Without sense of self self-agency cannot manifest. Without self-agency, Gotama's desire would never manifest. Without self-agency, desire can never actively be brought into being. Because of his helplessness and hopelessness around his desires he wished to annihilate and eradicate his desire. He made his personal helplessness a philosophical truth.

For Gotama his personal desire only led to helpless and hopeless. His lived experience seemed to be anhedonic, depressive and nihilistic. His agony of the experience of Absence reflected his absence of the embodied sense of Being and his absence of embodied sense of self agency.

His philosophical expression of the Noble truths and the four Seals and his philosophical assumptions reflect his personal agony of existence.

Vacuous-ness of Human Life

The mythical Gotama felt he was simply mind alone and beyond his mind there was only vast nothingness, void-ness and emptiness. Emptiness pervaded everything and everyone. Within the heart of human existence is emptiness or absence. At the heart of human existence is emptiness of Being and consequent emptiness of love.

His initial approach to his existential suffering was courageous stoicism. The core vacuous-ness of human experience that Gotama articulates is dramatically similar to the contemporary French psychoanalyst Jacques

Lacan, who voices the essential lack within the consciousness of human beings. Gotama's experience of the emptiness of Being as the core of human consciousness is also directly similar to the French existentialist Jean Paul Sartre's description of the human inner experience as nothingness as expressed in his text Being and Nothingness. Both Sartre and Lacan has a similar understanding that at the center within human subjectivity is lack or void.

An Existential Hermeneutical Interpretation of Gotama's Experience of Absence of Self

In the language and understanding of existential phenomenology, Gotama's experience of pervasive void-ness happens because his personal experience of absence of self reflects the absence of embodied Being-ness. This absence of the sense of embodied Being is experientially, the experience of the absence of self. Absence of self is absence of Being, and absence of Being is absence of self. Within the view of the existential phenomenology, our embodiment of Being is the same experience as our embodiment of the sense of self. The embodiment of the experience of self is the same as the experience of the embodied sense of Being. The sense of self is the sense of Being. The sense of self is the embodied sense of embodied Being. The sense of self is not a thingness but the sense of Being-ness in its openness and spaciousness. The sense of embodied Being is an ontological sense of cosmological Being. This view is an onto-cosmological view of self.

The Self is Not Our Mind

Phenomenologically, the self is not our mind but our innate innermost experience of our awareness. The innermost experience of awareness is Being. Awareness knows Being. Awareness is our sense of Being knowing Being.

In existential phenomenology there is the essential distinction between the knowing of mind and the knowing of awareness. This innermost awareness is the doorway to the unfolding of the experience of Being and the embodiment of Being. There is natural convergence of the experience of

the sense of Being and the experience of the inner sense of self. Within the tradition of existential phenomenology there is a convergence of the felt sense of Being and the embodied felt sense of self. Merleau-Ponty's exquisite phenomenological elaborations of embodiment present this understanding.

Contemporary Existential Psychology

There are many contemporary existential psychologists who speak to the convergence of the sense of Being with the convergence of the sense of self. Such people as Rollo May, R.D.Laing, Michael Eigen, Erving and Miriam Polster, Menard Boss, Eugene Gendlin, Irving Yalom, Robert Stolorow, Carl Rogers and Donald Winnicott to name a few.

Mind as Mental-istic

For Gotama his experience of his own mind was mental-istic and he experienced his conceptual representational mind as contingent and fleeting, from moment to moment. Gotama was located in his mind alone and he had no sense of ongoing continuity of self. He had no sense of ongoing continuity of Being. For Gotama there was no innate source of mind and there was no innate base of Being. There was no innate source of the sense of self. For Gotama there was no field of Being either within himself, or manifesting his existence in the world. The world was empty of Being. Gotama knew that even when he focused within himself and went beyond his mind's ideation, he would only experience void-ness, emptiness and the sense of absence. This absence is the existential experiential absence of Being. His experience of selfless-ness is the experience of Being-less-ness.

As David Chai brilliantly describes in Daoism, the sense of self is the sense of Being. The sense of self is the sense of the Dao, The sense of self is an onto-cosmological experience.

The World as 'As If'

The mythical Gotama experience void-ness not only within himself but also within the phenomenological actuality of the world around him. His experience of the world was void, empty and reflected his absence of Being. The world as phenomena lacked actuality or realness. The world as phenomena lacked the Being-ness of Being. The world was Being-less. Without the sense of Being-ness, realness will not appear. Without the sense of Being-ness the world is 'As If'. The world is illusionary although we pretend it is real and actual. The world for Gotama was illusionary and he pretended the world to be actual and real. Even today some pretend the world to be actual and real even though they believe the world is illusionary.

The Sea of Being-less-ness

From the view of existential phenomenology, Mythical Gotama lived within the experience of absence, absence of self and absence of the felt sense of Being-ness. The absence of Being-ness was experienced both as the inner absence of sense of self, as well as the outer absence of the Being-ness of phenomena. The world he lived in and dwelt in was Being-less. For Gotama Being-less Existence was Empty of Love and Empty of Bliss. Empty existence, Empty life, Empty person.

Phenomena and the appearance of phenomena was empty and pervaded by void. Gotama's philosophy of Anatman emerged out of his own pervasive personal experience of nothingness, void-ness and emptiness of Being within him and emptiness surrounding him. Empty of self and empty of otherness.

In time he began to heroically pursue a path of self- liberation that transcended the suffering of the absence of Being. He fled from his life as future king and he fled from his existential responsibilities for his wife and new born baby. Because of his absence of self He fled from love, he fled from attachment to others and he fled from his terror of death. Death horrified him. The sense of death and the sense of annihilation was ever present. He sees a dead person and he falls apart and disintegrates. Death was the signature of ontological emptiness as absence.

Beyond The Mind

For the mythical Gotama the inner experience beyond his mind was vast nothingness. For Gotama there was no ground of Being. His experience lacked the felt sense of presence of Being, the presence of embodied Being. Gotama lived without the sense of self as Being or Being as sense of self. Gotama lived in this sea of ambivalence and absence. He was ambivalent about his life. His world was ontologically empty and he was plagued with annihilation anxiety. He sees the dead and is horrified by the emptiness of existence.

Many human beings live in this horrible sea of absence. Many human beings live in this sea of terror and the sea of annihilation. This sea of terror is the emptiness of the presence of luminous Being, luminous awareness.

The Lived Self as Ongoing Continuity of Being

In existential phenomenology our very sense of Being is embodied Beingness which is our embodied existential sense of self. The self is not a concept but the ongoing experience of continuity of Being. Some persons actually experience the ongoing continuity of Being. In this experience one experiences timelessness in time and one's continuity of Being goes beyond life after life, and death after death. Ordinary people live within this experience of timeless awareness in time. Ordinary people live within this experience of Being within their own Being and within the Being of the world. This is the bliss of Being, the Bliss of human existing-ness. This is the bliss of the indestructibility of our innermost awareness.

Heap of Cognitions: Mind Knowing phenomena

Gotama would teach that the mind was a heap of cognitions. His mind was this aggregate of cognitions that could perceive the form of phenomena, could perceive sensation of phenomena, and could perceive feelings about phenomena. His cognitive mind experienced the perception of phenomena and he could formulate conceptualization of his experience of phenomena. His mind could sustain his mental representations of experience, his mind sustains memory. Gotama was conscious of the various sense perceptions such as the luminous gaze of sight, the scent of smell, the sensuousness of taste, the kinesthetic experience of body consciousness.

Contemporary Cognitive Psychology

Gotama's description of his experience of mind is very similar to contemporary cognitive psychology's description of mind. A human being is simply a series of cognitions and corresponding affects. And like contemporary mind of cognitive psychology, Gotama's mind could not know source or have a sense of unfolding source. For Gotama there was no language of Being.

His cognitive experience was absent of the experience of the ground of Being. Contemporary cognitive psychology is also absent of the experience of the ground of Being. Humans are simply a series of cognitions and corresponding affects. Such a simplistic psychology is an open condition for Ontological Anxiety and Despair.

Mind Does Not Know Being, Only Awareness Knows Being

Existential phenomenology understands that our mind does not know Being, only awareness knows Being. This is a stunning statement of the experience of our two different ways of knowing. There are two ways of knowing. The knowing of mind knowing form, and the knowing of awareness knowing Being. The mind knows duality and awareness knows non-duality. Our mind knows you and me, us and them, this and that. Our mind can know forms, both gross and subtle forms. Our mind knows time. Our mind knows difference and details.

"You and I are Indivisible".

Our awareness knows timelessness. Our awareness directly knows Being. Our awareness knows oneness and our awareness knows non-duality. As the Dakini said to Dudjom Lingpa "You and I are indivisible." Our awareness knows the non-duality of Being within the duality of beings.

Non duality of Being Within the duality of beings

Our awareness knows the non-duality of Being within the duality of beings. Our awareness knows Being and our mind knows beings. Our awareness knows oneness and our mind knows difference. When our mind is integrated within the field of awareness, then we as the one knower can know the Being of beings, and through beings experience Being itself. Through our own Being when we are in awareness, we can experience the Being of our own being and experience Being in and of itself. We can experience within the being of others Being itself. We can live in Being, we can embody Being. The knowingness of Being is the knowingness of our awareness, and our awareness directly knows Being. Awareness is our Being knowing Being.

For Gotama the Knowing of Awareness Was Foreclosed

The mind of mythical Gotama could not know Being. Gotama's mind could know forms and the details of form including the duality of forms and the infinite duality of forms of phenomena. Gotama could not access the knowing of awareness. Gotama could not experience the Being of his own being. He could not experience the sense of his own self as his own Being. He could not sense his own Being as his own self. Gotama could not enter into knowingness of awareness. The door of awareness seemed to be foreclosed.

Gotama could not enter the field of awareness and did not know the experience of becoming aware of awareness. Gotama could not become aware of awareness and experience the field of awareness, the field of knowing directly, the field of Jnana, the field of Gnosis, the field of Being.

The Experience of Self-less-ness of All Phenomena

Gotama could not experience the sense of self since his primordial sense of Being was foreclosed. Being is aliveness itself. Being is vital-ness itself. His lack of the sense of self was a function of his lack of the experience of Being. He was self-less and Being-less. For Gotama all human beings were self-less. He could see human beings but could not the sense Being

within the human beings. He could sense time and the appearing in time and disappearing in time of human beings. He could not experience the timeless dimension within himself and neither could he experience the timeless dimension within other human beings. The profound support of the experience of timeless awareness was beyond his mind's grasp. The experience of timeless Being was beyond his personal experience of emptiness of Being as self.

The Experience of the Unreality of Experience

Because of his lack of the sense of Being within himself and the lack of Being within the appearance of phenomena and appearance of phenomena as the world, Gotama could not experience the Being of phenomena. So all phenomena felt unreal and lacked actuality for him. Because of his lack of the sense of Being within himself and within other human beings he could not feel the who-ness in himself or others. He experienced a sense of depersonalization, a sense of who-less-ness. This lack of self as Being caused him difficulties with bonding and the life giving attachment to others. He felt no ongoing continuity of Being within others or within himself. Given the self-less-ness of all phenomena and the self-less-ness of the world, everything felt "As If" to him. Everything and everyone lacked the sense of actuality and the sense of being real. Human experience felt deluded and illusionary to Gotama. Being-less existence is always illusionary.

The Experience of Philosophical Self-less-ness

Because of Gotama's lack of the sense of Being and corresponding lack of the sense of self, he philosophized that all human beings are self-less, all phenomena is self-less, all experience is self-less, and thus all experience is unreal. For Gotama our experience has no base. For Gotama all human experience is deluded and illusionary. Because of his lack of the sense of ontological self, he experienced a profound lack of self-agency. He could not trust his sense of desire and he could not experience desire as this wonderful innate power that could bring forth the fruition of experience. He had no sense of how desire could be invoked and bring forth actual events

in life. Without the sense of self, without the sense of self-agency, desire is powerless and the person is passive and action-less and hopeless. Without the sense of self agency, desire is simply grasping!

The Experience of Foundational Absence! All Life Is Suffering

Gotama's sense of the absence of self, his corresponding sense of unreality of the world, and his corresponding sense of deluded-ness of human experience was a function of his knowing through his mind alone. Without the experience of the sense of Being, the corresponding sense of self-agency will not be present. Without the sense of self, self-agency does not exist. The self is not a thing. Our self is not a thought, a cognition.

The power of invocation does not exist for Gotama. Without the sense of Being, the sense of self is empty and the sense of self agency is empty. Without our direct knowing of awareness, Being is not known within us or is Being known within others. It is within this great emptiness of experience that Gotama consistently experienced, he philosophized that all life is suffering. There is only suffering.

Relational Experience as Source of Suffering

For Gotama desire is suffering since there is no sense of self agency. Because of Gotama's profound absence of self he came to distrust his affective states of experience. Because of his absence of self within himself and within others. Gotama distrusted relational bonding and the relational attachment of love to family, to friends, to his baby, to his wife, and to his parents. Gotama is not a happy person or a happy companion. He lacks humour and had no sense of fun or joy.

Within this existential absence of Being as self, Gotama would teach all emotional affective states is suffering. As Lama Dzongsar Khyentse illustrates so clearly Gotama's teaching that became early Buddhism would teach personal love is pain and the personal attachment of love is suffering. This same contracted understanding is taught today in the great text by Patrul Rinpoche 'The Words of My Perfect Teacher.' This text is has a distorted understanding about the liberating power of the experience of personal love . In this depressive context, liberation is cessation. The early

Buddhist teaching is the elaboration of the experience of lack. Sunyata is lack. Emptiness is lack. Without the power of awareness, this is true.

Indestructibility of Human Awareness

Gotama had no direct sense of the indestructibility of human awareness. He had no sense that our own awareness is primordial timeless awareness manifesting in time as us. Since he thought he was only his mind, he could not experience the ontological experience of timeless awareness in time. He could not know or experience timeless awareness since his mind could only know time. Only our Awareness knows timeless awareness. Only awareness experiences the indestructibility of timeless awareness, and only our awareness experiences the indestructibility of our own awareness as Being. Phenomenologically, awareness is our self. The experience of direct knowingness of Awareness was foreclosed for Gotama.

Bliss of Being Overcomes Suffering

There was arising of tantric teaching during the 4th and 5th century AD. The tantra's declares "Bliss overcomes suffering". The luminous Chakrasamvara Tantra declared the Bliss of Being overcomes suffering. The Bliss of compassion overcomes suffering. The Bliss of inner awareness overcomes suffering. This Bliss of Awareness overcomes the suffering of mind and the suffering of circumstance. The Bliss of Being overcomes the experience of suffering. The tantra, and tantric practice were focused on the embodiment of awareness and the consequent embodiment of Being. The tantric teachings understood that the experience of Being was inherently Blissful and inherently Beatific. As the tantras emerged into Vajrayana, the tantras illuminated that the experience of awareness was the indestructibility of Being, and the indestructibility of the Being-ness of awareness. This is the Vajrayana. Vajra means indestructible awareness.

Gotama's Obscuration of the Field of Direct Knowing

The obscuration of the field of direct knowing is limited by Gotama's love of the rational and reasonable Mind. Gotama was limited to only knowing through his mind alone, because Gotama valued the rational knowing of mind alone. He was a 6th century BC rationalist. He valued the mind's reasonableness. Only the knowing of the reasonable mind was valuable. Gotama trusted the rational reasonableness of mind alone. Gotama could only locate himself in the knowledge of his rational and reasonable mind. Gotama was a rational humanist of the 5th century BC.

Confidence in the Rational and Reasonable Mind

In his love of his rational and reasonable mind, Gotama is a contemporary person. Is he not? He forecloses metaphysical thought. He forecloses mystical imagery and archetypal imagination. He forecloses archetypal knowingness. He forecloses theistic imagery. In the language of Dzogchen, he foreclosed the Sambogakaya dimension, the archetypal dimension of knowing. He foreclosed the human dimension of rapture. In the language of Dzogchen, he foreclosed gnosis and jnana which is the direct experience of the awareness of Being.

Foreclosure of Jnana

Mythical Gotama foreclosed Jnana, foreclosed Gnosis. Gotama foreclosed direct perception, forecloses intuitive knowing. Gotama is the philosopher of Absence. Gotama is a philosopher of the absence of Being. Gotama is a philosopher of the rational mind. Gotama is a philosopher of the reasonableness of the absence of self.

Truth of Judgment is not the truth of Aletheia

Gotama thought that the truth of judgement about phenomena could only be decided by the mind alone. For Gotama the source of truth is the reason of the mind and the judgement of the rational mind. Gotama trusted only in the wisdom of his rational mind, and the reasonableness of logic. He is

similar to many contemporary people of today. Gotama did not trust psyche, did not trust direct mystic knowingness. Gotama did not trust Being. He did not experience Being. Gotama did not know Being. Gotama did not experience the Openess of Being and the Bliss of Being. For Gotama Being is not real and Being is not an experience for Gotama. Being was invisible for Gotama. Being was obscured.

The Truth of Judgement is Not the Awareness.

Gotama's conviction about the accuracy of the rational mind foreclosed his experience to the direct knowing of awareness of Being. Awareness gnosis and jnana was foreclosed. Gotama could not experience the field of awareness in the world, and he did not have the power of the direct knowing of awareness. Gotama could not experience or access the direct knowingness of Being. Gotama as most people equate knowingness with the knowing of mind alone. The knowing of judgment alone is the source of truth.

Unhappily, the knowing of awareness is more often than not mythologized, ritualized and framed in particular religious traditions. The religious traditions in turn take complete ownership of the natural knowing of awareness. Religion attempts to institutionalize the direct knowing of awareness and make such knowing its own "brand". Religion brands the natural and makes the natural its own possession.

The Mythological Magical Cultural World of India

Gotama did not trust the cultural world of the Upanishads and the cultural world of Vedantic knowledge. Gotama did not trust the pervasive mythological view of the Vedas. He did not trust the absolute certitude of the Vedic world and Vedic Cosmology. He did not trust the Eternalistic pervasive view of Indian Culture. He rejected Indian absolute certitude of Vedic culture. He rejected confidence in the mythologically based Vedic Culture and Vedic Deities. He only trusted the experience of the rational and reason based mind. He distrusted and questioned the mythological mind and the mythological culture of India. He distrusted the belief that everything was the presence of a God. He distrusted the Vedic

understanding of Divinity being as an Entity. For the Vedas Everything was the Presence of Being. The presence of Pure being manifested as all beings. Being and God are the same in Vedic philosophy.

The Tent of Religion

Gotama politically and ethically rejected the pervasive patriarchal framing of Hindu experience with its Mythological Caste System. He was repelled by the pervasive control of Hindu religion over all aspects of personal, family and political life. Gotama loved equality consciousness. He did not see the world in the distorted asymmetrical caste view of Hinduism. He resented the supremacy of priesthood in the Brahman based culture. He distrusted the domination of the priest based culture. He was repelled by the union of spirituality and royalty, He resented the cruelty of the sacrifice of animals to the gods. He considered most sacrificial rituals as sado-masochistic performance.

Cultural Mythology

He did not trust the cultural mythology of the unseen sky based Deities. He did not trust the endless archetypal expressions of gods and goddesses. He did not trust the pervasive inequality of wealth and status of the caste society. He was repelled by eternal inequality of great wealth and great poverty of India.

Theocentric Society

He resented the theocentric society with its theocentric hierarchal dominance. He resented the union of royalty and religion. Hindu religion covered every moment of person's lives within infinite detail of each moment of life. Everything was mythologized and mapped out within the illusion of absolute knowledge. Religion was politicized and patriarchal. He distrusted the authoritarian and dictatorial mind of the priesthood caste and

the Indian culture's focus on the omniscient person of the Guru. Gotama resented the deification of a person.

Demythologized Mind

Gotama did trust his experience of his de-mythologized mind. He did trust his rational experience of phenomena. He did trust his understanding of pervasive causation. He was preoccupied with causation as causation gave him an understanding of the unfolding of human experience. His understanding of causation helped him demythologize human experience. Causation took human rational thinking beyond animistic belief, beyond the magical moment of manifestation. The experience of his mind was the experience of emptiness and absence of self. He demythologized the Hindu world he lived in and he depoliticized the mythological gods of India. He loved political freedom and freedom of thought.

Why did Gotama not access Awareness?

In Vedantic and Indian philosophy the knowingness of awareness and the knowing of Being was completely mythologized in archetypal language of the Gods. The knowing of awareness was mythologized and expressed as only a form of religious knowing. The natural direct knowing of awareness was branded as a Hindu religious phenomena. Hinduism owned or pretended to own the natural knowing of direct awareness. The natural knowing of direct awareness was known as Jnana. The natural knowing of awareness was mythologized and owned and possessed by the clerical religious regimes. Teachers were beatified as gods. The person of the guru was a beatific god who alone knows. Gotama did not believe that a person needs the beatified human/god beings to point the way and give the permission to pursue this special way of knowing to obtain liberation. Today our mythical Gotama must be stunned to see how Deified he has become as the Buddha!

Natural Knowing

All human experience was mythologized and explained in the language of Archetypal Symbology. Gotama rejected the direct knowing of awareness and the direct knowing of Being because the knowing of awareness and being was completely contained in mythological language of Hinduism. The knowing of awareness was contained and hidden in mythological language of Hinduism. The natural knowing of awareness was itself mythologized and enowned by Hindu mythology of the patriarchal priesthood. A person had to enter the mythological stream in order to experience their natural light of knowing as awareness.

The natural experience was obscured by mythological drama and mythological language and mythological ritual. The mythological coded language of Being and the mythologized coded knowingness of Being can disguise and obscure the natural action of knowing of Being, which is the knowing of awareness.

Mind Alone Knowing

Gotama foreclosed his knowing Being and the Being of phenomena. He could not experience the sense of Being as his own self and his own experience of self as embodied Being. Gotama could not experience Being and Gotama could not live in the field of Being. He only could know through mind. He could only know beings and things, forms and details both subtle and gross. He could only know, and think in light of dependent origination which is the vast indescribable confluence and convergences of infinite ranges of causation.

Phenomenological Materialism

Gotama lived within his mind alone experience. Gotama's view was phenomenologically materialistic. His mind was based in the evidential experience of material phenomena. Through his mind he could know phenomena. Beyond phenomena there was only emptiness and void-ness. Today many people only live and know through their mind alone. Many people do not know the Being of their own being or the Being of the being

of other beings. Gotama did not know the multidimensional-ness of the field of awareness. He foreclosed the experience of awareness because he thought only the mind could know phenomena and the experience of phenomena.

Absence as Existential Philosophical Experience

Gotama's philosophical descriptions of the emptiness of phenomena and the emptiness of human experience reflects his own experience of the absence of Being. His sense of the emptiness of phenomena, was his experience reflecting his own experiential lack of phenomenological Being, the Being of phenomena. He could experience phenomena but could not experience the Being of phenomena. So the very world of phenomena presented to him the absence of the sense of Being.

Gotama's Personal Experience is the Source of the Anatman view

The nothingness that Gotama felt within himself and the nothingness that he felt within the world of phenomena and the emptiness that he felt within his own existence he based his philosophical understanding and his anatman view. His philosophical view of the delusion of phenomena and the illusion of life experience was based upon his pervasive sense of emptiness of Being as self and emptiness of Being as world. He was plagued and haunted by his experience of contingency of phenomena. The sense of nothingness pervaded his sense of phenomena and his experience of appearance and disappearance of phenomena. His ontological description of life as suffering and hopelessness reflects his own suffering and his own hope-less-ness. Being-less-ness is hopelessness.

Experience of Self Liberation

For human beings the experience of Being is often hidden and obscured. Since the felt sense of absence and emptiness does not mean that Being was not actually there, but rather the direct experience of Being was profoundly and personally obscured. The actuality of Being is always

present and the experience of the presence of Being is what is hidden and concealed. Liberation is the direct experience of what is already there and what is already given. Liberation is the experience of the invisible becoming visible. Sometimes the very form of Being and the forms of our experience of Being hide and obscure Being. The very forms of Being can hide and obscure Being. The phenomena of the form of a being can hide Being itself.

Gotama's Fundamental Option: The Option of Immanence and the Option of Transcendence

Existentially, there is the path of immanence and there is the path of transcendence. The path of immanence is the path of awareness experiencing Being. The path of awareness is the path of experiencing Being within one's own being and within the being of others and experiencing Being itself, cosmological Being. To experience the path of the immanence of Being a person must access awareness and also integrate their mind into the field of awareness. For many people the path of immanence is foreclosed and their experience of Being is foreclosed. This foreclosure often happens because of the mythology of mind as the sole source of knowing and because of the religious mythology as awareness being a possession of a religious tradition. This foreclosure happened to Gotama.

Transcendence of Mind and Transcendence of Phenomena

The path of transcendence is the path of going beyond phenomena and going beyond our mind. Many ancient and contemporary spiritual paths use the path of transcendence. The word spiritual is often associated with transcendence and dissociative forms of meditation. In the transcendental path Divinity is beyond the mind and beyond phenomena. Another way of saying this is the experience of Being is beyond our mind and beyond our experience of phenomena. Mind hides being and phenomena hides Being. The transcendental path is central in most Abrahamic religions such as

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The transcendental path is also central to Buddhism and Hinduism.

Because of Gotama's difficulty in experiencing Being and his pervasive experience of emptiness, void-ness, and absence of self, Gotama would naturally pursue the transcendental path. This transcendental path is the path of absence and the path of emptiness. Absence and emptiness are the doorways into the transcendental Path of Going Beyond mind and beyond the world of circumstance, the world of phenomena.

The Shift into Immanence: The Ontic/Ontological Shift

For persons who wish to enter into the field of awareness, there is this amazing shift from being in the mind alone to being in the field of awareness which is the field of Being. Often in the beginning of our entering into the experience of awareness of awareness, our awareness may be experienced as absence or felt sense of emptiness or nothingness. The very openness of Being may be initially experienced as void-ness and emptiness. We shift from the thingness of mind to the profound experience of Being as no-thing-ness. Being is the pure potentiality of unbound openness, unbound luminous spaciousness, unbound emptiness, unbound creative potentiality.

Two different Meanings of Emptiness

There is also an experience of emptiness which the sense of emptiness is the absence of the presence of Being. And there is an emptiness which is the very spaciousness and unbound creative openness of Being's pure creative potential. The more we are able to sustain and remain within the unfolding of our awareness within the pervasive experience of Being within us and around us, then the experience of Being becomes more vivid and more illuminated as pure vital presence. The experience of our awareness unfolds into our experience of the radiant Presence of Being.

Even now, my mind and your mind can not directly know Being. My mind thinks and feels dualistically. My mind knows difference. My mind knows

me and know you. Our awareness knows and experiences Being, and our awareness knows non-duality. Our mind knows difference and our awareness knows oneness, awareness knows indivisibleness. Awareness knows non-duality and mind knows duality.

Integration of the Two Ways of Knowing: The Path of Immanence

It is really necessary to integrate the two ways of knowing. We can integrate the knowing of mind within our knowing of awareness, and then we can know oneness and difference simultaneously. We can know duality of phenomena within non-duality of Being simultaneously. Within the non-duality of Being we can know the duality within all phenomena. We can know Being and phenomena simultaneously. We can experience our self as Being and Being as our self. As a human being we can experience the Being-ness of our inner most awareness as self. We can experience the being-ness of our own inner subjectivity as the Being-ness of awareness manifesting as I am. The Being-ness of awareness is Being-ness of self.

The Sense of Being-ness as the Path of Immanence

We can experience the oneness and the indivisibleness of Being-ness and Awareness. Awareness is the knowingness of Being. Awareness is not the knowing of mind. We can even experience the Being-ness of awareness within another person as their self. We can feel our embodied sense of self as the sense of embodied Being-ness. We can feel the Being-ness of another Being as Being itself, and simultaneously the Being-ness of our inner self, our innermost Being. We can have the intersubjective experience of inter-Being experience. We can experience the indivisibleness of Being between our self and another being. This is liberation through circumstance.

Being-less World, Self-less World: The Path of Transcendence

Gotama's philosophy of absence of self as absence of being would mean there is no experience of Being within us and no experience of Being within others. This is a self-less existence in a self-less world. This actually would

mean this is a Being-less existence in a Being-less world. There is no who as you, or who as me. The world is impersonal and thing like. There is no personal who-ness, no who-ness in anyone not even within your pet dog. Compassion becomes a who-less experience. Compassion is a self-less experience from one self-less person to another self-less person. This is anhedonia and the experience of lifelessness. This is existence as schizoid. Schizoid is existence without the experiential base of self, self as onto cosmological Being.

Being is Always Present! And yet Being is Not Always Experienced.

Again, Being is always presence. Presence is not always experienced. Presence is not known through mind but through awareness.

Phenomenologically this absence of being is not ontologically true! Although Being may not be experienced by a person such as Gotama, Being is always present as Gotama. Wherever there is form, there Being is. Wherever form is, Being is. The tragedy for Gotama was not that he is without Being or the world is without Being, but rather Gotama had experientially foreclosed his experience of Being. Gotama has foreclosed his own experience of Being in the world and his experience of the Being of the world. Gotama had foreclosed experiencing the Being of his own being.

Gotama's very own awareness was Being manifesting itself in this world as Gotama's own subjectivity, as Gotama's own self. Being is manifesting the being of Gotama's own subjectivity as awareness. Being is Gotama's self-ness. Gotama's knowing as subjectivity is the knowingness of awareness as self. When our subjectivity as our awareness becomes aware of its own self as Being, then, awareness is Being and our awareness is the experience of Being. As we become aware of awareness, Being is experienced directly and completely.

As we integrate our mind that knows beings into our awareness, our awareness knows Being, then we as the one knower can experience the Being-ness of beings as Being itself. This includes our own being, and our

own Being-ness as Being itself. This is the immanent existential view. This is the ontological base of the path of immanence.

Within the Realm of Immanence Being Has No Parts

Being self- manifests as our own awareness, as our own subjectivity, as our own knowingness. Being is manifesting within us as our own awareness. Our awareness is unborn and undying. Awareness is Being itself. Being has no parts! Awareness is not compounded! Awareness is an indestructible state.

Awareness Has Inherent Existence: Awareness as Vajra!

Awareness is not impermanent. Awareness has inherent existence. Being is inherent existence. Being has no need of support as Being is inherently existing and inherently self-manifesting. Being is self-supporting. Being is self-manifesting. Being is always multidimensional. Being is the Dharmakaya of pure potentiality, pure potential space. Being is the pure Sambogakaya dimension of the elements, vortices and the archetypal manifestation realm of becoming the Nirmanakaya, the ordinary life realm.

As we enter in the realm of death, we dissolve from ordinary life world realm into the Sambogakaya dimension. We continue to exist as Sambogakaya realm and we may dissolve into Dharmakaya realm and we experience continuity of Being within the pure potentiality of the actuality of the Dharmakaya. We are the Nirmanakaya realm, we are the Sambogakaya realm and we are the Dharmakaya realm.

The Dramatic Leap into the Realm of Transcendental Being by Gotama

We have explored the option of the path of immanence which was not personally available to Gotama. The experience of immanence reflects the union of mind and awareness, the union of Being within singular beings. The path of Transcendence is the path of going beyond mind, going beyond phenomena and going beyond embodied awareness. The path of transcendence is not the path of union of mind and awareness. The path of

transcendence is the path beyond embodiment, beyond the union of awareness and phenomena. The path of immanence is the path of union and the path of transcendence is the path of dissociation and detachment. These two paths of liberation are in existential opposition.

The transcendental path as it develops over time understands that the nature of the mind is awareness. The mind conceals and hides the nature of awareness. The mind conceals and hides the light of awareness. The transcendental path understands by dissolving the mind, the light of awareness becomes unconcealed and reveals itself.

Transcending Mind and Transcending Phenomena

The transcendental path understands that phenomena and the appearance of phenomena, and the form of phenomena conceal and hides awareness and the light of awareness. So the transcendental path of awareness is to transcend both mind and phenomena. The path involves withdrawing from phenomena, detaching yourself from phenomena and dissociating your mind from phenomena. The transcendental path also involves detaching and dissociating yourself from thinking, from affective experience, from memory, from imagination and even from sensation. The transcendental path is the path of freeing yourself from mind. The transcendental path frees yourself from phenomena. The transcendental path frees yourself from embodiment. What remains? Clear Light remains!

In this way a person transcends their mind and their experience of phenomena. As one frees oneself from mind, the nature of mind which is the light of awareness becomes manifest. This awareness that is becoming manifest is not embodied but is transcendental awareness which some call transcendental mind. As you enter into transcendental awareness, you enter into transcendental Being. Having entered into transcendental Being you become transcendental Being which is not a being. Being is not a being. The next movement of this unfolding into liberation is to merge into transcendental Being. This merging involves our dissolving into pure Being. To merge is to dissolve into transcendental Being. Gotama dissolves into Being, Pure Being. In dissolving into Pure Being, Gotama disappears into Pure Being, Pure Potential Space.

In dissolving into Pure Being Gotama Becomes Being. Gotama is no longer a being but becomes Being. Becoming transcendental Being is Becoming the Buddha. A being becomes Being itself. A being becomes the Buddha. Buddha is not a being, Buddha is not a person. Buddha is Being itself. This is not easy to understand. A being becomes Being itself. This is the transformation from personhood to Being , from personhood to Buddha. Buddha is not a person but Buddha is Being, Buddha is onto -cosmological Being. Buddha is Being. Being is primordial wisdom self-manifesting as beings. Being itself is not a being, not a person.

Buddha is not a being, but Being itself. Buddha is source of everything and anything. Buddha is wisdom and Buddha is the primordial guru, meaning the primordial drama of self- revelation and the self-manifestation of beings. Buddha is the unfolding process of self-revelation. The nature of beings is Being itself.

Gotama dissolves into transcendental Being, Gotama becomes Being. Gotama merges into Being. Being is Buddha. Dharmakaya is Buddha. A being becomes Being itself. So here we have a leap from a being experiencing oneself as a being, to becoming Being, becoming Being itself. In transcendental truth, personal self dissolves into Pure Being and becomes Pure Being. The personal self becomes the Pure Being of everything and anything. Duality completely dissolves into non-dual Being.

Nature of Buddha

In his discourses on the nature of the Buddha, the 11th century Dzogchen Master Rongzompa answers the question does the Buddha have gnosis? Surprising Rongzompa says the Buddha does not have gnosis since the Buddha is everything. It is this understanding that helps us utilize the language of continental phenomenology wherein the distinction is made between Being and a being. Gotama goes beyond being as being to becoming Pure Being. Gotama as a being becomes Being itself. Gotama becomes Buddha, Gotama becomes source. He is no longer a being but is Being itself manifesting beyond and through this Gotama being. Gotama becomes Being, and Being is manifesting through his being. So his liberation is both beyond mind and beyond body and he abides as Being itself. Thus is the power of the Buddha. In the Siddha tradition of Vajrayana Buddhism and in Siddha tradition of Hindu Kashmir Shavism

there is a similar understanding about the nature of the Siddha guru
Becoming Pure Being, Becoming Transcendental Being.

Self- liberation as Buddha is a shift in identity from being a person to becoming Being itself. Being is not a being. Gotama as person, lacked the sense of being and sense of self as being, and he merges into Being, dissolves into Pure Being and Becomes Pure Being itself. In the language of self, Gotama becomes the self of Being, becomes the onto-cosmological self in completeness. Truly, Gotama revealed the transcendental path of the cosmological truth of Being as self. Being as self is not Being as entity. Being is not a being, Being is not an entity.

There are Masters of awareness in both Buddhist traditions and in Hindu traditions who described being an ordinary person carrying ordinary life experience, and they described shifting, dissolving, merging and becoming Being itself. Being as source manifest through a being. Some yogis described accessing both dimensions of being a being and being Being. A person is functioning as ordinary personal human being and then enters, a merges and dissolves into the light of transcendental awareness and becomes Being itself. In becoming Being itself, in Becoming Pure Being, Pure Being can manifest through their personal being.

This event can also take place in dying wherein a person as a being completely merges and dissolves into Being itself. A person in dying may merge and dissolve into the Dharmakaya. The Dharmakaya is the pure potential space of Being. Their personal being merges and dissolves into Being itself. They may remain in potentiality, and in time self-manifest as a being, a personal being in actuality. There is the self-manifestation of Being itself through their own personal being.

In this paper we have phenomenologically studied the Anatman experience. We have focused on the experience of absence of self as actually the absence of the experience of Being. We have seen how the choice of transcendental praxis was a natural option for the Mythical Gotama to directly experience transcendental Being and to directly become the Transcendental Clear Light of Awareness. This is a heroic story of the mythical Gotama unfolding from experiencing Being-less-ness and selflessness to becoming Being itself. This paper also considers and

elaborates the direct knowing of Being in the immanent life of human beings.

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